new masses

15¢ • in canada 20¢ jan. 6, 1948

SECRET MISSION TO FRANCO SPAIN

by Rae Holt

A REPORT FROM MOSCOW

HOW THE RUSSIANS LICKED INFLATION

By SERGEI KOURNAKOFF

THE FUTURE OF NEW MASSES

see page 2

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Future of NEW MASSES

THIS is an announcement of concern to all readers and friends of NEW MASSES. With our next issue this magazine will discontinue publication as a weekly. However, the great *Masses-New Masses* tradition will be continued in a new form—in a new magazine that will mark, we are confident, a new level of achievement.

It is thirty-seven years this month since the founding of *The Masses,* the magazine of John Reed, Art Young and a host of other distinguished American writers and artists who made its pages a lighthouse of progress and socialism. This month also marks fourteen years since the weekly NEW MASSES was born out of the monthly by that name.

Whether as a monthly or a weekly and under whatever name—*The Masses, The Liberator,* NEW MASSES—this magazine for thirty-seven years fought the money-lords, the fascists and fakers, the corruptors of literature and art—fought for democracy, peace, socialism and a people's culture. That fight must go on. It will go on.

But once again this fight and the great tradition that it represents must assume new form—a form dictated by what will achieve the maximum effectiveness in the given circumstances. The financial imperatives, which we have fought off for fourteen years, make it impossible to maintain the weekly without seriously impairing its quality and usefulness. However, the political and cultural imperatives of our time demand that the work, the tradition, the editorial energies of NEW MASSES continue to play their part to the full. We are certain all our readers and friends will agree that everything that is best in NM must continue to live and grow.

During the past couple of weeks, when it had become increasingly clear that it would be impossible for NEW MASSES to raise the necessary funds to continue as an effective weekly in 1948, we consulted with contributors and friends of the magazine and with our colleagues of *Mainstream,* the Marxist literary quarterly, which has just concluded its first year. It has been decided that the best way to assure the continuation of the vital role which both publications have played is to suspend the weekly NEW MASSES and the quarterly *Mainstream* and to launch a new monthly in which the editors and contributors of both magazines will participate.

For all of us on NM this has been a difficult decision. No doubt for our thousands of readers and friends in this country and abroad it will be difficult too. But once the problem is understood, we feel certain that all the members of the NEW MASSES family will welcome the new publication and look forward eagerly to its appearance.

HERE is our financial picture in a nutshell:

Over the course of the years NM has had an annual deficit. Commercial magazines lose money on circulation, but more than make it up on advertising. That source of income, however, has been very limited

V-I Day Comes to Moscow Sergei Kournakoff 4
Gropper's Cartoon 5
Of Young Herndon: a poem Eleanor Mabry 6
Woman Against Myth: II Betty Millard 7
Portside Patter Bill Richards 8
The Trial of Velvele Federman: a short story Louis Lerman 11
Poland: New Land, New People John Stuart 15
The Secret Mission of "El Segador" Rae Holt 17
Book Reviews: Where I Stand, by Harold E. Stassen: Benjamin J. Davis, Jr.; **Selected Poems of Bertolt Brecht:** Joy Davidman; **We Called It Music, by Eddie Condon:** Sidney Finkelstein; **The Needle's Eye, by Timothy Pember:** Sally Alford 20

Two weeks' notice is requested for change of address. Notification sent to NEW MASSES rather than the Post Office will give the best results. Vol. LXVI, No. 2. Published weekly by THE NEW MASSES, INC., 104 E. 9th Street, New York 3, N. Y.

Copyright 1948, THE NEW MASSES, INC. Reg. U. S. Patent Office. Drawings and text may not be reprinted without permission.

Entered as second-class matter June 23, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies 15 cents. Subscriptions $6.00 a year in U. S. and Possessions and Mexico; six months $3.50; three months $2.00. Foreign, $7.00 a year; six months $4.00; three months $2.25. In Canada $6.50 a year, $4.00 for six months, U. S. money; single copies in Canada 20 cents Canadian money. NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers and artists. Manuscripts and drawings must be accompanied by stamped, addressed envelope.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for NM because the big corporations that rule our country and own almost all of its press turn thumbs down on a publication which crusades for the people and strives to abolish the very system under which the corporations rule. And unlike certain liberal weeklies, NM has had no wealthy angel or group of angels to cover its deficits. Its "angels" have been its readers.

During the war and postwar years production costs more than doubled. As a result, our annual deficit increased from $25,000 in 1940 to $65,000 in 1947. This placed a heavy burden on the magazine and its readers. In addition, each year that we failed fully to cover our deficit meant the piling up of debts.

Our readers have responded generously year after year. They have not let NEW MASSES down. On the contrary, they contributed more in 1947 than in any year in our history. However, the large contributors—those who gave $100 or more—have cut down since the war either because of a decline in their fortunes or because of the urgent claims of other progressive causes. This, together with the sharp rise in production costs and the mounting indebtedness, has created an insuperable problem.

The past six months have seen a worsening of the crisis. The editors spent more time trying to raise funds than attending to their editorial duties. When we launched a drive six weeks ago for $15,000 by January 15, the situation was desperate. It didn't seem likely we could reach that goal in so short a time, and even if we did, there was still the problem of raising a much larger sum for 1948. Yet without the funds that have come in during this drive—and without the moral support that poured out of so many warm letters—we could not have finished out the year.

RATHER than permit the NEW MASSES tradition to be reduced to a shadow, we propose now to revitalize it in a new form. Our colleagues of *Mainstream* too have had a problem, though theirs has not been financial. After a successful first year, in which the magazine achieved a larger circulation than any literary quarterly in the country, the editors of *Mainstream* had begun to feel that, in view of the sharpened attacks on democratic culture, it was necessary to get into the arena of struggle more actively and consistently than was possible in a publication appearing only four times a year. They therefore welcomed the proposal to launch a new monthly in which the battle against political and cultural reaction could be waged more effectively than before and integrated with the encouragement of a people's culture through the publication of high-level fiction, poetry, art, reportage and criticism.

The fact is, of course, that *Mainstream* itself is a product of the NEW MASSES tradition and its editor-in-chief, Samuel Sillen, was for seven years NM's literary editor. This new venture therefore is most appropriate and starts under favorable auspices. The new publication will be primarily a cultural-ideological magazine, providing Marxist insight and leadership for thinking, progressive-minded Americans. It will be a fighting magazine, seeking to unite professionals and the working class in shaping the democratic destiny of America—a destiny that runs counter to the designs of the forces of imperialist barbarism and obscurantism.

The magazine will sell for 35 cents a copy and its subscription rate will be $4 per year. It will step upon the scene with its March issue, which will be out the latter part of February.

We are enthusiastic about this new publication. We believe it has a rich and significant future. America urgently needs this magazine. Our people are being bedeviled with "free enterprise" nostrums and alarums of war. Our writers, artists, film workers, students and teachers are being told what to write, read, hear and think, our scientists are being made to toe the line of atomic terrorism, while our rulers dream of world conquest implicit in the Marshall Plan. But out of the morass of capitalist civilization new forces are rising, not only in Europe and Asia, but in America too. The movement to nominate Henry A. Wallace as an independent candidate for President, the movement for a people's coalition and a third party, the fight against the Thomas-Rankin inquisition, the growing resistance on the campuses to the thought-controllers—these voice what is still inarticulate in the hearts of millions, express the vision and courage, the imagination and spiritual values of those who refuse to pawn their souls for the cash and acclaim of the vultures who are the temporary masters of our country.

The strong sharp words of our new monthly will thrust through the fog of fear in which the plunderers and pundits seek to envelop the people. Neither the Rankins and J. Edgar Hoovers, nor the hucksters for an American Century, nor the partisans of Trotskyite corruption and malice will get any comfort from the new magazine.

TO ALL those who have stood behind the weekly NM in these difficult years, who have carried it as a banner in their hearts, our deepest thanks. No other magazine has had such devoted, self-sacrificing readers. This too is an indelible part of the NEW MASSES tradition. Your efforts have not been in vain; you have not only enabled NM to exist, but you have helped make it possible to launch the forthcoming monthly. For fourteen years you have done a superb job. We know we can count on you in the future.

The NEW MASSES tradition lives. The flame burns on.

THE EDITORS.

All NM subscribers will have an opportunity, if they so desire, to apply the unexpired portion of their subs toward subscriptions to the new monthly. Those who do not wish to do this will receive a refund. A letter is being sent to all subscribers with full details.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

V-I DAY COMES TO MOSCOW

The man on the street in the Soviet capital was too busy celebrating the victory to hear the news from abroad that he had taken an awful beating.

By SERGEI KOURNAKOFF

Moscow.

As I sit down to my old "General's Typewriter" the machinery of monetary reform is beginning to gather momentum. At the same time the bells toll for ration cards and these are pretty gay bells, too. As you know I'm no economist. Therefore, don't expect learned dissertations on the phenomenal thing that is taking place as I write. I only want to tell you how people as a whole feel about it. This is important because I don't doubt for a moment that you are being systematically misinformed about it by the commercial press and radio. Snatches of BBC broadcasts which I happened to hear indicated that devaluation—at the rate of ten to one—was being emphasized, with only a passing reference to other conversion rates and complete silence about the abolition of rationing and the tremendous decreases of prices.

As I walked to the station this morning in the distant suburb where we live, a fair-sized blizzard was blowing. On a slippery and windswept corner I was overtaken by a man carrying bundles of bread and other bakery products. His wife walked alongside him with other bundles. I heard the man say, "Katerina, do you understand what this day means? From now on, December 16th should be celebrated as our second victory day."

The man wasn't making a speech at a meeting. He wasn't propagandizing anybody. Furthermore, the place and the weather were far from conducive to oratory. That's the way the man felt. That's the way the overwhelming majority of the people here feel today.

When I arrived in Moscow, on the way from the Metro station to my office I poked my nose into a dozen stores. They were redecorated and restocked. Everywhere there were smiling faces and exclamations of delight at the sight of new prices on foodstuffs. At ten o'clock the new money hadn't put in its appearance but around eleven some exultant customers were already flashing some pretty new bills with bigger denominations, bearing Lenin's portrait, both "straight" and in watermarks.

Now let's look at the business end of this brand-new reform. This reform is actually a "triplex" affair. First, new money is being introduced with a graduated rate of exchange (of this later).

Second, the rationing system has been completely abolished.

Third, prices on almost all consumer goods have been brought down from high "open store" levels to that of formerly-rationed goods, and in some cases even lower (bread, butter, etc.).

Net result: The standard of living of the people has been raised very considerably.

Here are the main features of the currency conversion process: (1) It may be said that an overwhelming majority of workers are losing nothing on the exchange, while they are gaining a lot on prices. (2) All wages, salaries, honorariums and other remuneration for work performed remain without change. If you got one thousand rubles a month in old money, you get one thousand rubles a month in new money (beginning Dec. 1, 1947 and payable now).

Now what about the old money you have either on hand or in banks and savings institutions?

A great majority of the working people have their savings in banks. In order to protect these fully, the law says that all bank and savings deposits up to 3,000 rubles are exchangeable at par, old ruble for new ruble. People who have deposits ranging from 3,000 rubles to 10,000 get parity for the first 3,000 and a three-to-two rate for the balance. Thus if you have, say, 9,000 rubles in your savings account, you get 7,000 new rubles. Amounts exceeding 10,000 rubles are exchangeable at the rate of two to one. Thus a man with 50,000 rubles in the bank gets 27,666 rubles. However, the decrease in prices for goods in the long run will counterbalance the cash losses.

All government loans—loans for the first three Five-Year Plans, war loans and the first reconstruction and development loan of 1946 are convertible into one consolidated loan to be issued in May, 1948 at the rate of three rubles for one. (The 1938 so-called "negotiable loan" is convertible at the rate of five to one.)

All cash in private hands, hidden under mattresses, in tin boxes, etc., is exchangeable now at the rate of ten old rubles for one new ruble. Holders of loan certificates have no kick coming either, because most of them paid for the certificates in depreciated rubles during the war when prices of some commodities were up several times above normal.

The monetary reform not only removes the danger of inflation but is also automatically eliminating large quantities of phony money with which the Germans and their allies flooded occupied territories. The maximum of fairness to the working man or woman has been applied by the drafters of the law. This is undeniable and should be apparent to every fair-minded person. All you have to do here is look at the faces of the people and you can't help feeling that your footsteps are becoming lighter and your movements brisker. This is a holiday!

The abolition of the rationing system, when viewed against a background of the economic chaos of many European and other countries where rations not only remain in force but are being reduced, and where prices are spiralling and black markets flourish, is a momentous step in itself. It means that Socialist economy has been able in two short years to absorb the shock of the consequence of unparalleled war and the severe drought of 1946. Many capitalist countries which

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have suffered incomparably less than the Soviet Union cannot even begin to think of taking such a step.

Most amazing of all is the reduction in prices of consumer goods. This reduction is almost universal. Before today's reform the ratio between prices of staple foodstuffs being sold on ration points and those sold in "commercial" stores was roughly 2.5 to one. I don't pretend to be exact about it but this is what I get from comparing prices of a score of basic goods. Now all prices (with very few exceptions) have been brought down to the ration-price level. Thus the purchasing power of the ruble has been vastly increased. Prices vary slightly according to zones and I'll quote a few of the Moscow (central zone) prices. Macaroni cost about 24 rubles a kilo in commercial stores; now it is 10. A kilo of sugar was 70 rubles; it has now dropped to 15. Pastries were 12 rubles, 50 kopeks; now they are four rubles, 50 kopeks.

Bread and gruels have been reduced 10 to 12 percent as compared to rationed prices. A kilo of bread is now three rubles (it was bringing many times more in the open market this summer before the harvest). Meat is now about two and a half times less than it was. Eggs have come down three times.

However, there are some exceptions: chocolate, liquors and wines haven't been reduced and it is still expensive to tipple and munch chocolate candies. Smokes have been reduced but much less so than foods.

It may surprise the average American to see that bread here is still almost thirty cents a pound (according to the official rate of exchange), but it might equally surprise him to learn that the monthly rent for a three-room apartment costs only about twelve dollars at the same rate of exchange; that medical care is free, that a twelve-day vacation in a rest home costs the worker the equivalent of three day's wages. Prices of consumer goods have come down on an average more than three times. This morning I saw rubbers (a very important item) being sold at 45 rubles instead of 250. Clothes have been marked down fifty to sixty percent.

However, luxury goods (perfumes, etc.) remain unaffected.

Now that the main problem has been solved with the abolition of ration cards and the issuance of new money (a big job when one considers the size of the country), the thing is to produce enough goods to satisfy the demands of a free market, which is expanding because, with prices drastically reduced, the people's real earnings have increased. Socialist planning, the selfless efforts of the people in fulfilling and overfulfilling the plan, and masterful guidance of the Soviet government will accomplish this task.

This is our bloodless "V-I" Day—Victory over inflation!

Mr. Kournakoff is well known to American readers and lecture audiences who followed his military anaylses during the war. He is the author of several books and pamphlets published while he was living in this country.

OF YOUNG HERNDON

by Eleanor Mabry

I always see him as I saw him last,
his sullen beauty dark among the pale.
Not woman-beautiful like his brother Angelo,
but man-beautiful; a titan in his body
as well as in his moral judgment. There
he stood among the small-bodied and fair
who laughed and moved and took their places around
young Herndon, standing among them like a stone
in sunlit rapid. It was the first of May;
each union was gathering, and we were deeply gay
and talkative, sometimes: and sometimes silent
as we thought, "We marchers are in the closing ranks
of a larger company than we can see; but they march
with us and we with them. And danger
is neither near nor far; we are with danger
in the ugly looks of the cops, the way their horses
move like machines, a little farther along
the crowded way."

But where we gathered they had not sought us out,
in the small, old streets among the small square houses
of colonial times. The windows were square and bright
with the blue, Dutch day of an earlier New Amsterdam.
Peaceably we assembled; I found my friends and they me
and which banner we would help with along the way
by turns with the others. But sometimes I glanced to see
the titan Herndon where he stood with an inward look
but an outward intellect and a generous heart;
he stood among us, but within himself apart
through the long distrustful years of childhood and youth;
he threw me a look, resentful, proud, and dark,
then returned to his inward musing on outward things.

We were not taught about Attucks, who in '70 fell
on Boston Common; not in my schools were we taught
that Crispus Attucks was Negro and first to fall
in the Revolutionary War; oh no! He was too soon,
a belittled giant; perhaps Sam Adams' man.
And the Tories English and Yankee hated the lot
who built this country ethic on ethic and dream
on democratic dream. And even today
American Tories try to sneer away
the services of Tom Paine and the imprudent lot
that ventured life itself, that we might be taught
how to be free. In my schools we'd never heard
of Attucks; I'd heard of Spartacus the slave
who rebelled at the cost of his life against sinister Rome,
in one metamorphosis she presented to the world.

But of Attucks I'd never heard; yet I think he was where
young Herndon stood, and I think he marched with us there
that sparkling first of May. And died in Spain
where Herndon died against Rome and Berlin so soon,
and laid him down in his manhood's early noon
to sleep with our precious dead; the seed of good
for all mankind, sown in a little wood
or some small field. The rifle Walt gave him lay
beside him along the earth. But no alien day
struck sparks from its muddied metal; the sun's for us all;
and the wheeling stars that brighten the towering pall
of our infinite night shine on each of us anywhere.

(*Milton Herndon, a member of the American Communist Party, was killed in Spain while fighting with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade.*)

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WOMAN AGAINST MYTH: II

Is her inferiority a "law of nature" or a product of historical development?

By BETTY MILLARD

(*This is the second part of a two-part article. The first appeared last week.*)

WOMEN's attempt to achieve equality with men involves an especially difficult, concealed and subtle struggle because women are not isolated in ghettos but live in intimate daily relationship with the "superior" sex, a relationship infinitely complex and entangled with biological, economic and social factors.

Even many otherwise progressive men cling to their vested interest in male superiority, and many women are so committed to the seeming security of their inferior yet "protected" position that they echo the voteless, propertyless, completely dependent women of a century ago who declared to Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony that they already had "all the rights they wanted." In this sense one might say it is true that "women like to be dominated," that they tend to take on the convictions and standards of fathers and husbands, of any men on whom they become dependent. It is an attitude common among people who have found that their security depends on approval of some powerful individual or group. Some women lose no opportunity to attack members of their sex; the Dr. Marynia Farnham who with Ferdinand Lundberg wrote *Modern Woman—The Lost Sex* (and followed it with "The Tragic Failure of America's Women" in the September *Coronet* magazine) is no less contemptible in her betrayal of her sex, and especially of those great women who fought to achieve for her the advantages she enjoys today—such as a medical career—than is Milton Mayer, who as a Jew attacked the Jewish people in the *Saturday Evening Post*, or Warren Brown, a Negro who insulted his people in the *Reader's Digest*.

The assumption of woman's inferiority has too long been accepted by both sexes as a biological fact. The James Gordon Bennetts of the world say that woman is doomed to subjection "because it is the law of nature." Frederick Engels, however, has a different slant on it. In earliest gens society, according to him, there was no place for domination and subjection, either social or sexual. The division of labor was natural: the man waged war, hunted and fished; the woman looked after the house, prepared food and made clothes. Each was supreme in his own sphere; the man owned his tools—weapons, etc.—and the woman the household equipment. Housekeeping as well as marriage was communal (the group marriage), and whatever was made and used in common was common property of the tribe.

It was the domestication of cattle that led to the undoing of this primitive communism. At first the herds were owned in common, but as they grew and cattle became increasingly an article of exchange, ownership passed from the tribe to the individual heads of families. Prisoners of war were transformed into slaves to provide the labor necessary to this widening field of production, and there arose the first great cleavage of society into two classes: masters and slaves, exploiters and exploited. At the same time a revolution came over the family. It had always been the man's job to procure the means of existence, and the instruments required for this were his property. The herds were the new means of existence; they therefore belonged to him, along with the commodities and slaves taken in exchange for the cattle. The woman had no share in the ownership of this surplus. As Engels puts it in *The Origin of the Family*, "The woman's household work had now dwindled in comparison with the man's labor in procuring the means of existence; the latter was all-important, the former an insignificant adjunct." At the same time monogamy arose—for the woman—because of the man's desire to bequeath his private riches to his own children and no other; it set the pattern, of course, for those as well who had no wealth to hand on. And with this unilateral monogamy came prostitution.

Hence with the rise of private property and the master and slave society woman herself became an object of exploitation. Her inferior status has persisted in every society based on the exploitation of one class by another, whether the exploited be slave, serf or wage-earner. The great majority of women became the vassals of vassals. Cut off from the productive process, they were confined to household drudgery, were uneducated and took no part in public life. Then, much as when Negroes are excluded from education they are then accused of being ignorant, women were declared to have no brains worth mentioning. Marriage based on love—on other than property and prestige considerations—was a rarity. It was not until the beginnings of capitalism, undermining the rigid traditions of feudalism and substituting the concept of free contract for that of inherited right, that the revolutionary concept of marriage based on love began to gain ground. Until that time, a woman was supposed to remain absolutely under the power of father, husband or guardian, and do nothing without his consent.

THE earthquake that cracked the old prison walls around women was the industrial revolution. The introduction of machinery created a demand for cheap labor—and that meant women (and children). Working fourteen hours a day for two or three dollars a week, women found themselves in a new and more brutal kind of slavery; but at the same time, learning painfully the lesson of organization, they laid the groundwork for their freedom. For as Engels says, "*The emancipation of woman first becomes possible when she is able, on an extensive, social scale, to participate in production, and household work claims her attention only to an insignificant extent.* And this for the first time has

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been made possible by modern large-scale industry, which not only admits woman's labor over a wide range, but absolutely demands it, and also strives to transform private household work more and more into a public industry."

This emancipation by no means took place automatically. Every inch of the gains women have made has had to be fought for. They were fought for on the picketline in 1834 when 2,000 factory girls in Lowell, Mass., struck against a wage-cut, when women umbrella-makers went out in 1863 against seventy cents for an eighteen-hour day—conducting their struggles not only against their employers but against the overwhelming prejudice against "un-feminine" women who asserted their rights in any form. They were fought for in legislatures, on the platforms, in the church, in the home. They were fought for within men's trade unions and within Abolitionist circles, where women had to do battle for their right to help end Negro slavery.

The greatest leaders of this struggle in the nineteenth century were Susan B. Anthony and her life-long collaborator Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Susan Anthony is at least a remembered name today, although there are few who have any idea of her momentous contributions. But Elizabeth Cady Stanton is truly America's forgotten woman. Yet when she died in 1902 she was called by some "the greatest woman the world ever produced." It is hard to accuse her admirers of over-enthusiasm, for it is doubtful if any woman had ever done more for the human race than Mrs. Stanton. While Susan Anthony provided the great organizing talent, and the single-minded drive to achieve the vote for women, Mrs. Stanton might be called the theoretician of the movement: she attacked along the political, economic and psychological fronts.

From the day in 1848 when, discouraged in such a revolutionary step by all her friends but Frederick Douglass, she demanded the vote for women at the first Women's Rights Convention, she brought forward one issue after another—divorce, education, sensible clothing, religion—and brilliantly showed their relation to woman's struggle for equality. She was an ardent Abolitionist. The abuse heaped on her by outraged men and women alike merely made her more militant as the years passed. In her old age she became, though of middle-class background, increasingly pro-labor and attracted to socialist thought, alienating the conservative younger women for whom suffrage had become "respectable." In addition to bringing up seven children she wrote and spoke—she agitated—continuously throughout her long life. It is an indication of the shameful neglect of the heritage of the women's rights movement that such a woman can be virtually forgotten today. (Her life is described in an excellent biography by Alma Lutz, *Created Equal.*)

Of course, the roll of honor in the women's struggle is a long one: Mary Wollstonecraft, Lucretia Mott, Wendell Phillips, Frederick Douglass, William H. Sylvis are there, to name only a few. Every woman today who votes, speaks her mind, gains an education or enters a career owes them an immeasurable debt.

YES, women are in industry and public life to stay. But still after a century a draftsman (f.) will be turned down in nine shops out of ten solely because she belongs to the wrong sex; if she's hired she'll be paid less; and if she should have children she might just as well forget the whole thing. For since capitalism's preferred use of woman is as a source of cheap labor it only reluctantly makes use of her higher talents as she develops them, and makes little provisions for the mother who must (or wants to) work. For a society that eagerly welcomes woman's entrance into new fields and lays the economic and legal foundations for her full participation, we must turn to socialism and the Soviet Union.

It is not a mere matter of expediency that women have been brought into social production in the Soviet Union. True, in a society in which there is no class of profit-makers to stand as a barrier against full production and full employment every mind and pair of hands is welcome; but there are larger issues involved. They can be summed up in Lenin's famous phrase, "Every cook must learn to govern." No Soviet woman is forced to work if she would rather stay home and live on her husband's wages (and many still do); but it is a basic principle of Soviet thought that woman must assume responsibility outside the home if she is to realize all her potentialities as citizen, wife, mother and creative individual.

To this end the Soviet Union has established a network of aids to women, and especially mothers, that is without parallel in other countries. Space forbids extensive description here: most notable are the factory and neighborhood

portside patter

By BILL RICHARDS

A Hearst writer says that "excessive taxation is drying up the capitalist system." The public, however, will continue getting soaked.

•

General Lee, former commander of American troops in Italy, is turning to Evangelism. This will mark the first time a collection was made with a brass hat.

•

It is reported that King Michael was told by the Rumanian government to find a suitable girl to marry. According to reliable sources this amounted to "you pitch woo or we pitch you."

•

Peron believes the next two years will be "terrible" for Argentina. There are many who believe that there is no basis for such optimism.

•

The top UN delegates can now import tax-free Scotch at $1.50 a bottle. The UN may have a real problem—if the liquor isn't high the delegates might be.

•

Senator Taft dares the Democrats to make an issue out of compulsory health insurance. He is determined that the United States will have a chronic pain in the neck whether we like it or not.

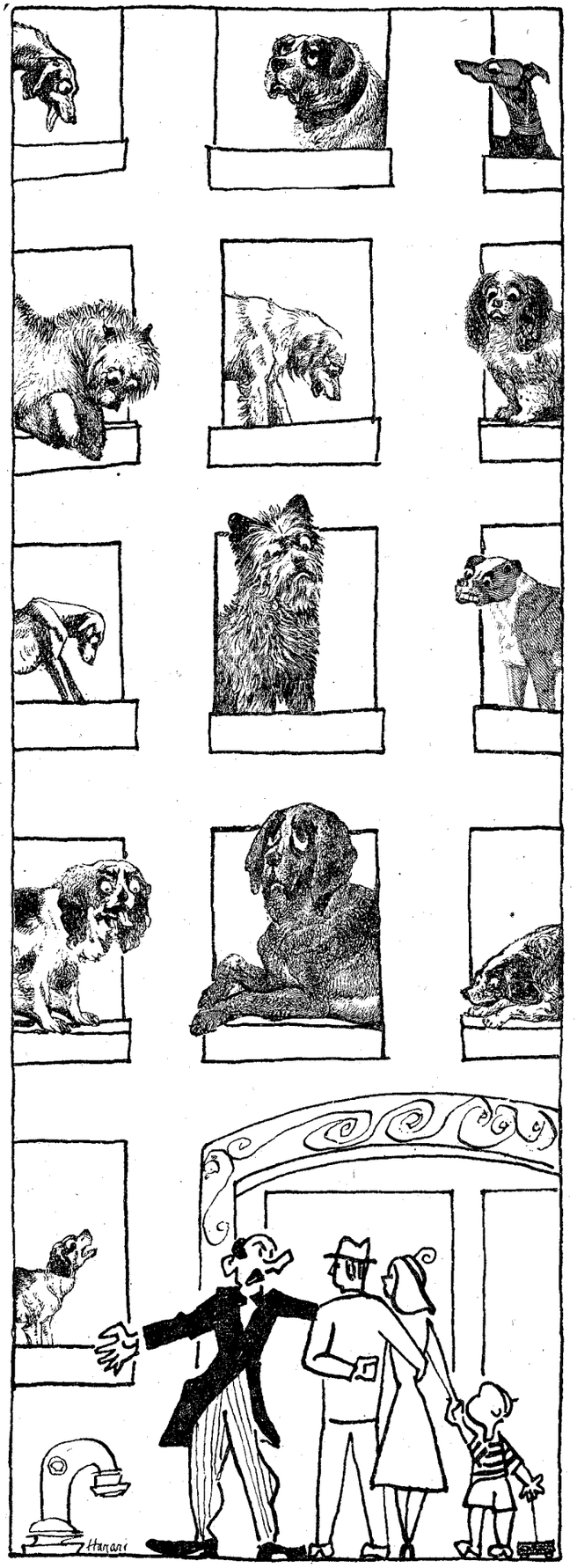
PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nurseries that, staffed by trained specialists, care for the children while their mothers work; the three months' maternity leave with pay; the free medical care and the monthly grants for each child after the third. No job is barred to a Soviet woman on account of her sex. The only limitations are: (1) her physical ability (and the picture changes as rapidly as mechanization progresses and her muscular inferiority becomes irrelevant); (2) her educational and technical qualifications. Soviet women do not yet hold an equal number of skilled jobs or directorial posts, for they are still paying for centuries of ignorance. But that handicap is fast being overcome. Every factory and farm has become an educational center; women who were eighty percent illiterate in 1917 already by 1939 formed half the student body in higher institutions of learning. By 1946 women constituted twenty-one percent of the deputies in the Supreme Soviet. In other fields they have forged ahead even more rapidly: today, for instance, over half the Soviet Union's doctors are women.

As a consequence a momentous change has taken place in Soviet family life. With women no longer economically dependent on fathers or husbands the groundwork has been laid for completely free marriages based on equality and mutual love. The Soviet family has, after the early upheaval of the civil war period, been constantly strengthened through the years. At the time of the Nazi attack prostitution and venereal diseases had been all but wiped out—a revolutionary achievement in itself, done not through jailing prostitutes but primarily through an attack on the economic causes of prostitution. The divorce rate is steadily declining; even when "postcard divorces" were still obtainable they were used less and less frequently. Women have become more intelligent mothers and more interesting companions as wives. As mothers, they not only have learned improved techniques from their contact with the nurseries but because of their activities outside the home they do not fasten themselves upon their children as their only means of fulfillment —to the detriment of the children as well as themselves— and do not end up "ex-mothers," with no function left to them, once their children have grown—as is often the case in our society. As wives, an indication of the changed attitude was the play *Tanya*, produced in Moscow about ten years ago, in which the heroine gave up her medical studies when she married and stayed home, becoming the "little woman." As a result she had nothing but trivialities to offer her husband in the way of conversation and he became attracted to another woman who had an interesting job. The happy ending came only when the heroine went back to her career—the Hollywood thesis in reverse.

In America today one out of three marriages ends in divorce, a startling fact which has been the subject of innumerable magazine articles and sermons. But no moral preachments can disguise the fact that it is Communist Russia that is establishing new highs in family stability while capitalist America is witnessing an increasing breakdown in family relationships. The conclusion is unavoidable that the one is a reflection of the cooperative relationships that permeate the whole of socialist society, while the other mirrors the insecurity and corrosive stresses of our competitive system.

FREEDOM, as Engels noted, is the recognition of necessity. When Frederick Douglass as a slave in Baltimore came to understand the basis and meaning of the slave system he



"Sorry—no children."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was already in a profound sense freer than the man who "owned" him. As we grow in understanding of the historical impulses involved in man-woman relationships we begin to free ourselves of ancient concepts concerning women and begin to see more clearly the path toward equality.

For instance: we are told that "you can never trust a woman," that women are tricky and devious. What is the reality? The reality is that any oppressed people who cannot meet their oppressors on an equal footing resort to guerrilla tactics—whether they are Greek anti-fascists, Negroes, Chinese peasants or women. The woman who has to beg, wheedle or nag her husband for a new coat—or maneuver him into thinking that he had the idea in the first place—is talking to a man who holds a position of economic superiority and she cannot discuss the question with him as an equal.

Again, it is a fact that there are fewer good speakers among women than men. It is usually the man who can order his thoughts better, can proceed on a direct course to the logical end of an argument. It is a woman more often than a man who substitutes emotion for reason. If, on the other hand, she thinks logically, then she "thinks like a man."

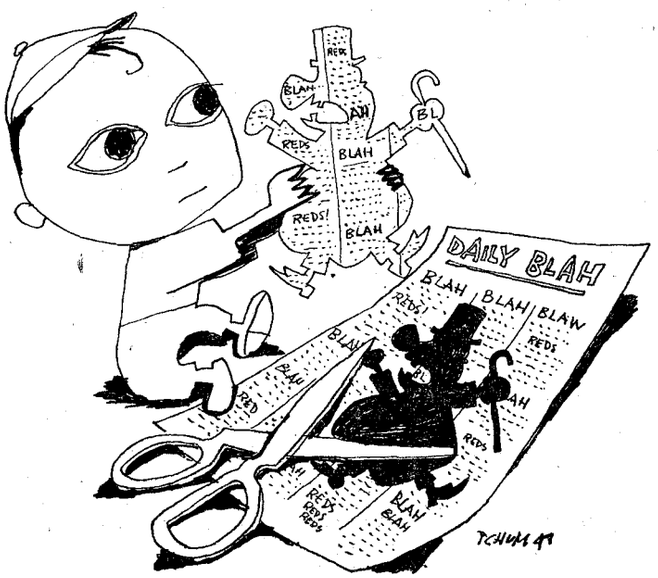
Of course, there are many exceptions to these generalizations, and as women grow in activity and self-confidence the generality in regard to them becomes increasingly less valid. For it is precisely because woman has been excluded from the productive process and hence from the larger activities and problems outside the home that she does find these difficulties in expressing herself as a human, thinking person. In a society in which every young girl learns that the worst thing she can do is appear more intelligent or better informed than the boy who takes her to the movies it is hardly surprising that those same girls later find difficulties in expressing themselves which no man could ever possibly encounter.

Hence when we talk about the need to bring women into leadership in unions and other organizations we face a double problem. For it is true that women are not today as equipped for leadership as men—for reasons which by now should be clear. Even in the Soviet Union women do not as yet occupy the highest political positions: the newsreels show that the May Day observers on Lenin's tomb are still all men. But while the Soviet government has a conscious political philosophy and program designed to bring women into equality, ours does not; and it is here that we reach the other aspect of the problem. For it is up to the progressive movement to supply that conscious leadership. Women must continue to be a major force in their own liberation, but they can move ahead only in common action with the working class. And that means activity based on Marxist understanding: it means the trade-union organization of millions of women as yet unreached; it means a serious attack on male chauvinism, and its reflection among women; it means the conscious effort to find abilities among women where they are not immediately apparent. It means that a man who does half of the household chores after he and his wife have come home from work will not feel that he is doing his wife a favor; for equality cannot be given as a favor but only recognized as a fact.

And it means, finally, struggle together with such organizations as the Congress of American Women for price and rent control, for the rights of the doubly-oppressed Negro women, for nurseries, for protective legislation and equal pay—in short, for a fuller democracy. Without this larger struggle the attempt to throw off woman's historical restrictions cannot be successful.

This new year, as we mark the hundredth anniversary of the publication of the *Communist Manifesto*, we will mark also a hundred years of the organized fight for equality of American women that began with the Seneca Falls convention. Those two events are linked by more than a common date. More and more we come to see that it is only the socialism foreshadowed by Marx and Engels, abolishing as it does all forms of exploitation of one human being by another, that can make it possible for women to achieve real equality. That can give substance to the ringing declaration adopted at that woman's convention holding it to be self-evident "that all men and women are created equal."

IS THERE an instance in all history of an oppressed class being secured in all their rights without assuming a "belligerent attitude"? Earnestness, determination, true dignity ofttimes require a "belligerent attitude." Just imagine some writer in the old Boston *Gazette*, saying in the height of the Revolution of '76, "I am sorry James Otis, John Adams, Patrick Henry and George Washington are so belligerent. How disgraceful to the memory of the Puritans, for New England men to rush on board a vessel and pitch a whole cargo of tea into the harbor; what spiteful child's play was that! How much better to have petitioned King George and his Parliament in a dignified manner for a 'respectful consideration' of their grievances." . . . When we can get all our women up to the white heat of a "belligerent attitude," we may have some hope of our speedy enfranchisement.—*Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, May, 1873.



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE TRIAL OF VELVELE FEDERMAN

A short story by Louis Lerman

THERE was the time Velvele Federman was brought before the Great Tribunal for cursing His name. The gavel hammered twice and the bailiff pulled Velvele to his feet. "Everybody rise," the clerk blared out. "The Court of the Great Tribunal is now in session, Judge Gabriel presiding."

The Angel Gabriel came in, followed by the other two judges. They walked to the bench, took their seats, Gabriel in the center and the other two to the right and left of him. The gavel hammered twice again. The whispering ceased. The bailiff pushed Velvele into the witness stand. The clerk said, "Raise your right hand." Velvele raised his right hand.

The clerk mumbled, ". . . after me solemnly swear to tell the truth the whole and nothing but so help me say I do give the Court your name. . . ."

Velvele gave his name.

"Your address?"

He couldn't remember for the moment. It was in the cellar where the bakery had once stood, but he couldn't remember the name of the street. There was Nalewki and Krochmalna and Lubeckiego but the Germans had changed all the names. When they came for him, he wasn't frightened, he wasn't even excited. He had been expecting them for some time. There were two of them. They weren't wearing the gray-green uniforms and they didn't carry guns and they spoke to him as if he were a human being. But it was some kind of trick. He would find out soon enough what the trick was. He was tired and he had been alone for a long time and he was even a little glad that they had come. It wouldn't take long. A few hours, a day or so and it would be finished. The Germans didn't waste time.

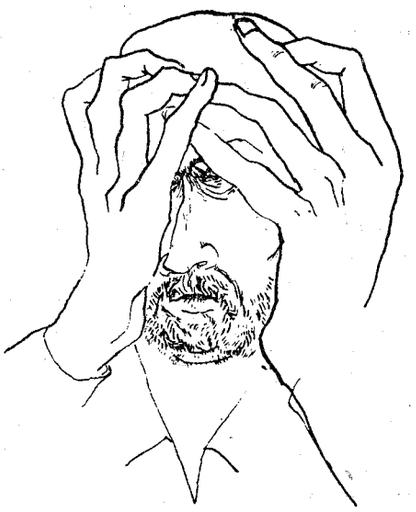
"Where do you live?" shouted the clerk in his ear.

"In the cellar," said Velvele, "where Berel's bakery used to be."

"What cellar? What bakery? The Court wants to know the name of the town you lived in."

"It's not there any more, the town," Velvele said.

The last time he had seen it, there was only one house left standing, Yakovlev's house. It wasn't a big town, Pomyentze. One bomb and no more Pomyentze. Only Yakovlev's house left standing and even that had a big hole on one side that you could put a door in. But, it had occurred to him then, what would be the use of



Al Blaustein.

another door? There was only one room in the house and what use would anybody have for two doors? Especially the Yakovlevs, since they were dead now.

"What was the town called when it was there?" the clerk asked. It was obvious that he was becoming irritated.

"Pomyentze," Velvele said.

"Why didn't you say that in the first place," muttered the clerk. He called out, "Your Honor, the name of the defendant is Velvele Federman and he lived in Pomyentze."

"Get me the statistics on it," ordered the judge.

The clerk went out and came back with an atlas. He ruffled the pages and read, "Pomyentze, Poland. Population 354, including 64 Jews. These are the pre-war figures, of course," he interpolated. "The main industry. . . ."

"That's enough," interrupted the judge. He turned to Velvele. "Do you have counsel?"

Velvele shook is head. Judge Gabriel looked around. Then he beckoned to the rear of the courtroom. There was a whispered colloquy at the bench, then the judge announced, "The Archangel Michael will act as counsel for the defendant."

The Archangel Michael looked at Velvele perfunctorily and sat down at the counsel's table. The Angel Azrael, prosecuting attorney, sat down at the other end. The jurymen filed into the box. Then the charge was read by the clerk in a loud voice. Counsel for the defense asked for a ten-minute recess to consult with his client and the judge recessed the court.

THE bailiff led Velvele to a small anteroom. There was one narrow window in the room and it was barred, but the light came in through the bars and threw a sunny reflection upon the stone floor. It was good to be alone again. Living in the cellar, Velvele had grown unused to so much talk and so many people. And besides, he was confused and he wanted to think a little. What the charge was, he wasn't yet altogether sure; it had been so swallowed up in legal phrases. It had to do with cursing His name, that was clear. That it was not a German court was also clear, even to Velvele, who had been in a court only once before in his life. The other time was in Pomyentze long before the war—before the other war, that was. A business of peddling without a license. He didn't have enough to pay them off. It was a long month, he remembered, while Channa almost went crazy with worry, running around from door to door begging enough to pay them off so they would let him out of jail. He wasn't the only one arrested and money was scarce in Pomyentze, even in good time.

This court was something like that other one. There was the hectoring clerk, for instance, very much like the police and officials of Pomyentze. And the judge, sitting up there like the Lord God himself, cold and removed, not looking at Velvele, even when he asked him a question. On the other hand, the jurymen looked kindly. One of them had even smiled a little at

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Velvele. And they looked familiar, as if he had seen them before; one or two of them looked like Jews he had known in Pomyentze.

Then, all at once, it struck him. Of course. The one who had smiled at him, that was Yankele Schneider, and Yankele Schneider was from Starasche and Starasche had been bombed by the Germans also. Yankele wore new clothes, he looked better fed than Velvele had ever seen him before; that was why he hadn't recognized him right away. But Yankele Schneider had been killed, and thinking that, Velvele touched himself to see whether he was alive.

He didn't have any more time to think about it because the attorney came into the anteroom then. But Velvele didn't need any more time now. He knew. Except that it was so different than he had thought it would be. It was as if he had been asleep for a long time and he had just awakened. Asleep and dead and unfeeling and now he was alive.

The Archangel Michael sat down, rubbed his hands together briskly and said, "Well, let's go to work. Of course you'll plead guilty. It's a first offense and I think I can get you off with a suspended sentence. Although with Gabriel you can't always tell—it depends on the impression you make. You let me do the talking. Keep your eyes down to the floor and look frightened. If you can remember not to overdo it, stammer a little when he asks you a question. But look meek, that's the important thing, that's what he likes. You look like that kind of a Jew naturally, so you shouldn't have any trouble."

Velvele said quietly, "I don't want to be ungrateful, but if you don't mind, I would like to be my own lawyer."

"What!" gasped Michael. He stared at Velvele open-mouthed—a little Jew, thin, cadaverous-looking, as if he hadn't been fed for years, his clothes torn and bedraggled, his beard unkempt. He wasn't clean. There hadn't been much water in the cellar under Berel's bakery where Velvele had lived since the Occupation. The kind of people they bring in nowadays! thought Michael. He shrugged his shoulders, called the bailiff and they took Velvele back to the courtroom.

MICHAEL went up to the bench and murmured to the judge. The judge sat up, looked at Velvele as if he were seeing him for the first time and said sharply, "Counsel tells me you wish to plead your own case?"

"Yes," said Velvele.

The judge frowned.

"Yes, *Your Honor*," hissed the bailiff into Velvele's ear.

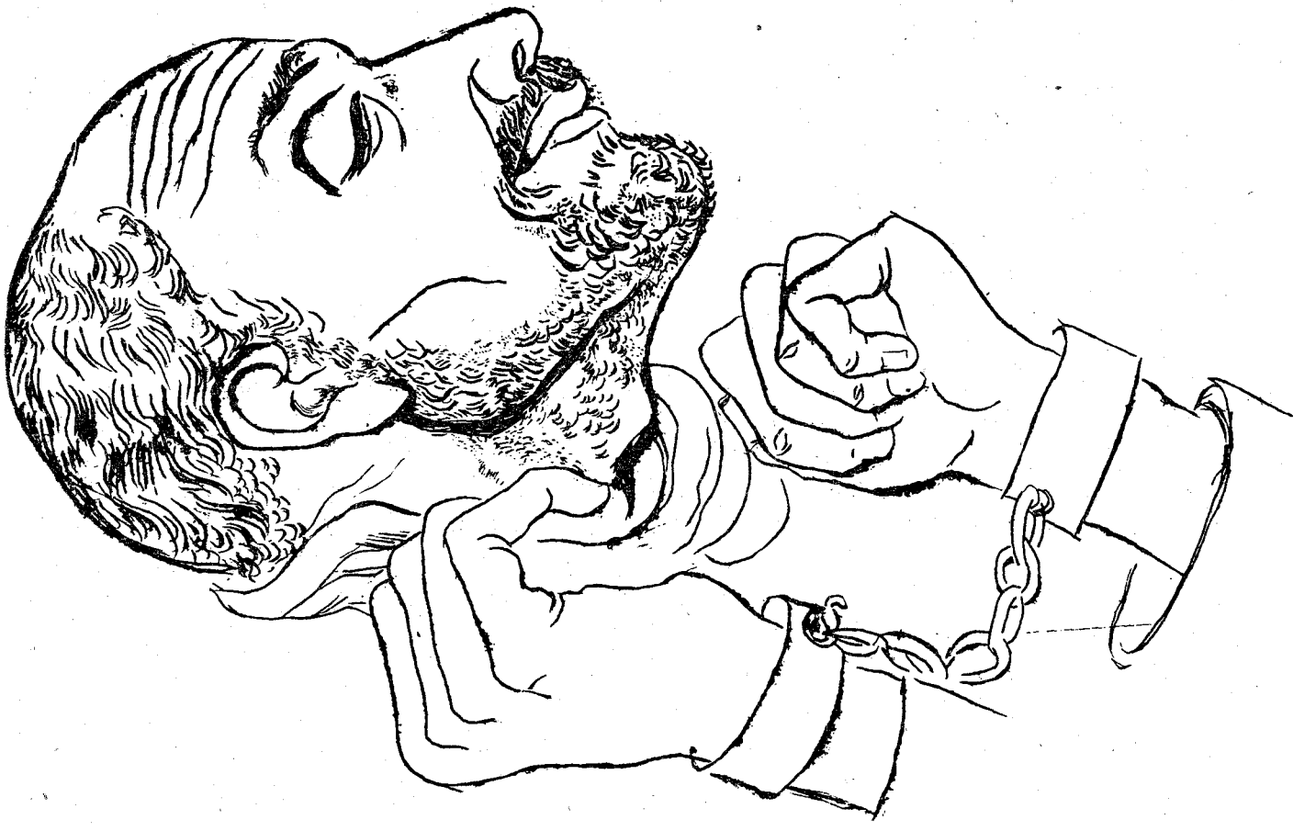
"Yes, Your Honor," repeated Velvele.

The judge examined Velvele carefully. His eyes moved slowly from the man's torn, muddied shoes to the black skullcap on his head. Then he said coldly, "To plead a case, defendant, requires a profound knowledge of the law. It is my duty to warn you against such a step. If you wish to reconsider, I shall ask counsel if he is still willing to accept your defense."

Velvele said, "If it is permitted, Your Honor, I wish to plead my own case."

"Very well," said the judge frigidly, "that is your privilege. You will keep in mind, however, that once the trial opens, there will be no change in counsel. Further, this being the Great Tribunal, there is no appeal from the decision of this court. Do you understand, defendant?"

Velvele looked up and said, "Yes, Your Honor." But he noticed that Yankele Schneider was looking at the



Nierendorf Gallery.

"Dead Prisoner," an engraving by Josef Scharl.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

judge, and Yankele looked surprised and questioning as if he hadn't heard or hadn't clearly understood what the judge had just said, and that he had half-raised his hand as if to ask a question and then dropped it again.

The trial proceeded with the usual formalities. Velvele, as attorney for the defense, waived his opening speech to the jury. Azrael, for the prosecution, said that he proposed to establish the fact that the accused, Velvele Federman, had cursed His name. Significantly, he omitted any reference to premeditation. He indicated that the trial should be short, at least from the side of the prosecution, since he proposed to call no witnesses, although, he pointed out, witnesses were available. It was his intention, he said, merely to cross-examine the accused and rest his case.

It was evident immediately that Azrael was not prosecuting actively, that either his sympathies were with the accused, or that he was a little worried about Velvele. In any case, the line of his opening remarks hinted broadly that the prosecution would support a plea for mercy, if the defense made it.

"Velvele Federman," he began, "although it is my duty as prosecuting attorney to win a conviction, I wish to make the jury familiar with the somewhat special circumstances in this case. I am aware, for example, and I think it might interest the jury to know, that the statement you are charged with making was made under great stress and at a time when a man like yourself might very well claim that he was not in command of his normal faculties—in a word, at a time when your wife and two children were killed by the Germans. Isn't that so, Velvele?"

Velvele nodded his head. There was a buzz of whispering from the spectators.

Azrael went on, his voice even and low—it was obvious even to those jurors who were new and had not served before that Azrael was enjoying the effect—"And that immediately you made the statement you were charged with, you wished that your tongue had been cut from your mouth before it had uttered the words. And —" with a glance at the judge who sat on the bench seemingly unmoved, "you blessed His name that your wife had lived the years allotted to her and your children theirs and that since that day you have asked His mercy for forgiveness and that now before the Tribunal you are prepared to make a full statement to that effect."

He waited a moment for Velvele to say something. Velvele was quiet.

"Did you hear what I said?" Azrael asked.

Velvele said, "Yes."

"Well?"

"I have no statement to make," Velvele said.

WHEN Azrael spoke again, his voice was hard and businesslike. He had been fooled into sympathy once, his voice said, and it wasn't going to happen again. "Very well, Federman," he said harshly, "I want you to answer this question directly, a 'yes' or 'no' and no equivocation. Did you or did you not curse His name?"

"Yes," answered Velvele.

"Tell the court and the jury under what circumstances it was that you cursed the Blessed Name," Azrael ordered, stiff and formal and unbending.

"The circumstances you know. Everything you know," Velvele said abruptly. "Why are you asking me? They killed them."

Azrael smiled and turned to the jury, his eyebrows lifted in mock surprise, as if they were saying, look at him, the way he gets angry at a simple question. "Who is it you refer to as they?" he said smoothly.

"The Germans," answered Velvele, his voice like a closed fist, but with a tremor in it. The judge looked at Velvele fixedly, his eyes hard and cold and hateful. And of all the jurymen now, there was only Yankele Schneider whose eyes dimmed and who looked at Velvele as if he understood.

"And because the Germans killed them, you cursed His name?"

Velvele didn't answer.

"Answer the question, Federman," Azrael's voice was still low, but it sounded threatening, harsh and ugly and threatening. "Why did you?"

Velvele answered quietly, as if he had made up his mind not to be baited into anger, "Because He had created them."

"And what were the words you used exactly?"

"I do not remember the words I used exactly."

"What were the words you used approximately, to the best of your recollection?"

"I said, cursed be His name because I was ever born and my wife and children. . . ." Velvele stopped.

"And then," said Azrael, "and then I suppose you said a word or two about the Germans?"

Velvele nodded.

The stenographer waited for the answer. "Answer yes or no," said Azrael.

"Yes," said Velvele.

"And what did you say after that?"

"Nothing," said Velvele. "There was nothing more to say. Everything had been said already."

Azrael was silent for a dramatic moment. He half turned to the jury, then spoke, his voice strident and angry, "And who do you think you are to make such statements?" his forefinger shaking in Velvele's face. "What have you done in your whole miserable life to earn the right to make such judgment, to even dare to whisper the name of the All Highest, let alone. . . ." He left the sentence unfinished, to be filled in by the jury. "Who the devil are you anyway, with your miserable little life? You ought to be grateful for the breath of life He blew into your nostrils."

Velvele should have been used to it; to be talked to as if he were a piece of dirt underfoot was not new to him. For forty-three years he had been treated like a dog by the Poles and then for four more years like a Jew by the Germans. He should have been used to it. But this was different. This wasn't Pomyentze, the thought flew up to his head while anger came up bitter as bile in his mouth: this wasn't Pomyentze and yet the same thing was happening. The same thing still going on. It was all the same, any place a Jew went it was all the same. All his life he'd been a fool to believe that it would be any different here. It was all a pious fraud, nothing more. The anger wouldn't stay in his mouth. It burst out in spite of him. "Grateful!" he shouted, his voice shrill. "I should be grateful? For what? For being born a Jew? For working all my life like a horse? For living in a stable? For watching my children's bellies get swollen? For what? For war and bombs and three pogroms in one lifetime? Grateful?" shouted Velvele, almost beside himself now. "I could spit it back in His face—that life."

THERE was silence, hard and brittle, as if the judge, the jury, the attorneys, the guards, the spectators were holding breath, shocked and motionless. Azrael stared at Velvele for this

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

long moment of silence, then he turned to the bench and said, "I ask for this miserable snivelling Jew the extreme penalty. The prosecution rests." He sat down.

The judge cleared his throat. It rasped in the quiet. He said to Velvele, "Stand down, accused." Then mockingly, "Counsel for the defense."

Velvele rose from his seat in the witness-stand. Tired, as if by a great effort he lifted his body from the chair. He looked around him slowly, at the audience, at the jury, at Azrael already beginning to stuff the papers lying on the table before him into his briefcase, then he turned to the bench and said, "Your Honor, I wish to call the Lord to the witness stand."

Azrael's hand remained suspended in mid-air, his mouth open a little as he stared at Velvele. There was a hollow gasp from the audience, followed by a hoarse whispering. Gabriel said sharply, "The Court will come to order." The whispering stopped. He turned to Velvele, snapped out, "Entirely out of the question."

The court stenographer lifted his head out of his notebook and said, "Your Honor?"

Gabriel turned his back on Velvele and swung around to face the stenographer. Formally, for the record, he said, "Request of counsel for defense denied."

It was quiet then, everyone waiting for something to happen, not sure of the next move, all eyes glued on Velvele. Velvele walked down the two steps from the witness-stand, faced the bench and in a hoarse tone that seemed to belong to someone other than the little man with the unkempt beard, he broke into the silence. "I demand that the Lord be summoned to testify."

For the first time the judge faltered. He turned first to the right and then to the left to whisper into the ears of the other members of the Tribunal. A murmur arose from the audience again, but this time Judge Gabriel did not attempt to stop it. After a moment he straightened up in his chair and in a voice that he tried to make assured and decisive he said, "The Court will recess to consult on the defendant's request."

He arose and walked out stiffly, followed by the other two members of the Tribunal.

The whispers grew louder as the Tribunal walked out; they were loud and buzzing, like a swarm of angry bees. The eyes on Velvele were expectant and curious and a little afraid, all except those of Yankele Schneider, who sat with the shadow of a smile on his lips and his eyes warm looking at Velvele.

The courtroom quieted after a while and waited for the door of the judge's chamber to open. The Tribunal filed out, one after the other, and took their places. Gabriel stood up at the bench and for the first time he looked at Velvele as if Velvele were a person to talk to, not as if he could see right through him and he didn't exist. "The Tribunal," he announced, "after consultation and reference to the Code, concludes that there is no basis for the request of the accused, Velvele Federman, to call upon the Lord to testify. . . ." Citing the case of Isaiah 3:13, the judge, now decisive and certain, proceeded to quote at length from the commentaries of other judges and of the prophets, concluding with the statement that "the Tribunal, unwilling to judge harshly and conceding to the special circumstances in this case, will grant the accused the unusual privilege of calling any other witness, living or dead, to testify in his behalf, and is prepared to issue the necessary subpoenas upon request." Thereupon the Angel Gabriel, with a thin and placating smile at Velvele, sat down.

VELVELE looked at Gabriel with red rheumed eyes, and a tic jerking across his face twisted it into a bitter grin. In Velvele's face there was no anger now; there was only scorn at these lawyer's tricks and speeches. After a long moment Gabriel turned his eyes away and his smile faded.

Velvele said nothing. But in the jurybox, Yankele Schneider, as if he were no longer able to contain himself, jumped to his feet and in a high-pitched voice that Velvele remembered from Starasche, shouted out, "Velvele, don't let them fool you. You have the right to appeal." Then Yankele, with a look of wonder and great astonishment at his own temerity, sat down.

From the back of the courtroom, the section reserved for the people, came a tentative burst of applause. The clerk hammered on the table with his gavel until the applause died down. Gabriel said angrily, "The next demonstration and I shall have the courtroom cleared. This is not a political meeting." But his tone was not decisive this time. It was hesitant, as if he weren't altogether sure of his own statements or his power to enforce them. He bent his head to the right and then to the left, and then all three judges bent their heads close together over the bench. But before they had raised them again, Velvele had spoken. His words were clear and full-bodied, as if they came from many people at once and the echoes struck back from the walls of the great room: "I appeal from the ruling of the Tribunal."

Then Gabriel, in a voice unsure and old and a little stumbling, spoke. "The accused, Velvele Federman, has appealed from the ruling of this court. I ask for a poll of the multitude of the living and the dead and those to be born to pass judgment."

There was a great silence for a moment, then from the farthest corners of the earth there was a sound like a great wind blowing and in it you could hear men working and women laughing and children singing at play, and then that sound died away slowly and from the millions tortured in prisons, from the mass graves in Treblinka and the heaped mountains of charred bones in Maidenek and the sewers of Warsaw there was a groan that drowned out every other sound on the earth. Velvele stood up straight, his eyes staring off, and on his face a look as though he were listening to himself groaning.

Gabriel slowly looked around him at the judges to the right and the left, then he stood up and intoned, "I call upon the All Highest, blessed be His name, to appear as witness in the trial of the Jew Velvele Federman."

From afar off there was suddenly the blast of trumpets and the rustling of great wings and then a blinding light filled the courtroom. When Velvele could see again, there was a figure seated in the witness chair. Surrounding Him were four angels with drawn swords and six cherubim. All around there was nothing but silence, only around the witness chair you could hear the cherubim chanting softly. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory." But beneath the chanting was the sound of the groan, barely heard, but it seemed nevertheless to fill the world, all the pain there was in it. Then Gabriel said, "Your witness, Federman."

Velvele stood and looked at the Presence. He looked the way Velvele remembered thinking about Him as a child, a figure with a vast quiet draped around Him like a cloak and two beams of light ascending from His forehead into the reaches of the heaven. They looked like searchlights

(*Continued on page 23*)

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POLAND: NEW LAND, NEW PEOPLE

Their jazz is pure schmaltz, but the rhythm of reconstruction accents the march of a nation.

By JOHN STUART

This is the second article in a series by Mr. Stuart. The first appeared last week.

Warsaw.

I CAME by train to Wroclaw (Breslau) in Poland's recovered territory in the West. For Poland this territory makes up in part for Nazi pillage. It provides the economic means to lift the country out of its backwardness and speed the revamping of an archaic social structure. Poland becomes one of the major world sources of coal; there are also zinc and lead and other metals to guarantee the development of a large metallurgical plant. In Lower Silesia the textile and machine industries have been given a powerful push forward, when in the past they were restricted by the Germans.

As for agriculture, the new lands are beginning to produce in a way they never did before. Moreover, Poland now has a coastline seven times as long as before the war. Her commerce will not be choked off in a narrow corridor, and Gdansk (Danzig) will forever be kept from becoming a center of intrigue such as it was under German domination. With the acquisition of Szczecin (formerly Stettin) in addition to other ports, the whole Polish transport system becomes more efficient and productive.

The resettlement of these areas is an epic that would take tons of ink to tell in detail. Five million Poles came west in less than three years. They walked, they crammed trucks and trains with all their meager belongings, they used anything that moved on wheels. I have heard this migration compared to the trek westward in the United States. But it is more, for it was a migration into ruined cities and to an earth scarred and punctured and shorn almost bare.

I was struck with the speed of reconstruction in the area I visited. Staggering work still remains, but except for the architecture you would never know that this countryside had been German. The atmosphere is Polish, the language is Polish, the spirit is Polish. The German street signs are gone. Waldenburg has become Walbrzych; Reichenberg is Rychbach. And at a drop of a hat a Pole will tell you with detailed references to history and ethnography that it was always so before the partitions.

In Wroclaw I stayed at the Hotel Monopol. In the evening if I listened hard I could make out the furious jazz being played in the restaurant downstairs by Wozniakowski and his boys. Their rendition of "Tiger Rag" sounded as though the city was being attacked again by air and land. They also played in purest schmaltz rhythm a Polonized version of "Music Maestro, Please," the saxophonist tooting his heart into it while someone sang in Polish, "tonight, tonight I must forget." It was exactly the way I felt about Wozniakowski's orchestra.

I OPENED the door to the small balcony outside my room. When I turned back later I forgot to shut it, and the next morning the hotel maid noticed it. "Have you been practicing making speeches?" she asked, a sly smile on her old face. "No," I replied. "Well, don't," she continued. "That's the balcony from which Hitler spoke when he was here during the war."

I shuddered but it was a fine prelude to what I was to see the next day. I had heard stories about a Jewish settlement in Dzierzoniow — an hour's drive from Wroclaw. When I got to this sleepy town I wandered around trying to read the Yiddish placards covering the walls. Finally I got to the office of Starosta Wasserman, the Jewish official in charge of the district. Wasserman is a short, wiry man whose outgoing personality is belied by heavy shell-rimmed glasses which make him look like a young introverted college instructor.

"Our community," he began, "consists of some five thousand Poles and fifteen thousand Jews." He told me that most of the 100,000 Jews left in Poland now live in the recovered territories. They are there as a moral barrier against anyone from abroad who should try to expel them by returning these territories to the Germans. They till the land, work in the mines and textile factories; they are leaders in the cooperatives which they themselves have organized. Today one of Poland's great leaders, Jakub Borman, is a Jew. Other Jews hold government office and I believe that Wasserman is the first Jew to hold the position he now has. Others are in business for themselves or practice their professions.

The pogrom in Kielce in the summer of 1946 again roused anxiety among Jews but the speed and thoroughness with which the government dealt with the outbreak reassured many. There is no denying that there is anti-Semitism in Poland. You cannot in three years root out the poisonous prejudices of decades—prejudices fostered under the czars, intensified by the Nazis and now continued by the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

underground bandits and some in the Catholic hierarchy. But anti-Semitism is dwindling and there are laws with teeth in them against any act which threatens the Jews. In Dzierzoniow Jews mix easily with Poles, and elsewhere relations with non-Jews in factory or mine are excellent. The Jews publish their own newspapers with the Polish Workers Party (Communist) issuing a special paper for Jewish readers.

I spent part of a Sunday afternoon with the families of Moishe Gelman and Jacob Heisner. I went out to their farm with Wasserman, after he had taken me to see the "sportsschule" —the name the Nazis gave their slave labor camp just outside Dzierzoniow. There in black marble was a tombstone, inscribed in Polish and Yiddish, erected to the memory of the 130 Jews slaughtered by the Nazis and then thrown into a mass grave. A few feet away was a single headstone marking the grave of a Jew who died two days before liberation.

For all their past suffering the Gelmans and the Heisners are a gay crew. They have found life at last on about ninety-five acres of land given them by the government and which they work cooperatively with two other families. Moishe Gelman is a real one for gadgets. No sooner did he hear that an American was visiting then he rushed over to show me some of the contraptions he had improvised. He wore riding boots into which his riding pants were neatly tucked. With his cap pushed to the back of his head and a slightly worn gray tweed jacket over his back, Moishe indeed looked the prosperous farmer. In the huge parlor the families gathered around with the two babies, a grandma and a grandpa holding the spotlight. I wanted to know why there were so few kids and Mrs. Gelman said: "Give us a chance. You can't have babies in a concentration camp." On her left forearm was tatooed a tell-tale blue number—a reminder of days slaved under Hitler.

FROM Wroclaw to Katowice, the big coal city in South Poland, we jounced along in a wayward bus that was middle-aged twenty years ago. Katowice is as drab as any coal town in Silesia or Pennsylvania. The Poles call Katowice the Birmingham of Poland; there are a dozen industries there but coal is king. Mention coal to Stefan Stazewski, the editor of Katowice's *Tribuna Rabotnizca* (Worker's Tribune), and his face glows. If you talk of miners his enthusiasm is unbounded. The story of his paper is in itself a magnificent tale. A provincial daily, owned by the Polish Workers Party (Communist), it has in less than three years reached a circulation of 450,000. Stazewski confidently tells you that in a month or two the paper will reach the half-million mark. "That's the plan." I gulped when I heard these figures because I knew that the Workers Party's central organ in Warsaw, *Glos Ludu* (Voice of the People), was only reaching 150,000 readers each day. *Tribuna* is such a success not only because it has the presses which *Glos Ludu* lacks but because it has mastered the art of talking to workers in the workers' language. It is more than a newspaper: it is a key force in galvanizing increased production in coal through the labor competition which a miner, Wincenty Pstrowski, started in his own pit.

Coal is Poland's gold, its international coin. The country's foreign trade is chiefly based on coal exports. The value of coal and coke shipped abroad represented over fifty percent of all Polish exports in 1947 and it will increase even more next year. Europe's coal crisis has brought practically every country on the Continent to the Polish pits. In return Poland has received cotton, investment equipment, petroleum, petroleum products, ores, foodstuffs and hides. One big reason why Polish coal is in such high demand is that the importation of American coal increases Europe's dollar deficits. Ordinarily Poland would be a natural source of coal supply almost exclusively to eastern Europe. But it has gone into western Europe to meet coal demands. Even Britain has imported Polish coal. And I have heard more than once that this is sufficient answer to any attempts to isolate Poland economically. The whole area of Polish trade is thus expanding with coal paving the way—and expanding not only in area but in value and quantity.

Poland has been able to make phenomenal progress in the production of coal because it has liberated the industry from the impediment of foreign capital. Coal is nationalized and the majority of miners feel that they are working for themselves. In 1945 extraction amounted to a little more than twenty million tons; October 2, 1947, that figure had more than doubled. The increased mechanization in the mines and the radical changes in the miner's attitude toward his work are among the essential reasons for the increase. The average individual output per miner has risen by almost fifty percent over what it was two years ago. The increase would have been larger if some mines had not been destroyed by the Germans and if mining equipment from abroad could reach Poland more rapidly and in larger quantities.

BUT what has recently given mine production a great push forward is what the Poles call the inter- and intra-industrial competition in the efficiency of labor. The competition started with a letter written by the repatriated miner, Wincenty Pstrowski, now a member of the Polish Workers Party, to *Tribuna Rabotnizca*. He had left Poland years ago after a long stretch of unemployment. When he came back from Belgium to the new Poland, Pstrowski went into the mines again and began doing almost legendary things with pick and shovel. His letter to *Tribuna* challenged other miners to increase their production. In a few days *Tribuna* was swamped with letters and labor competition began to catch fire all over the country. Miners challenged each other; one industry challenged another; competition agreements were signed between miners and textile workers. Contests started between teams of workers and individual members of working units. And when I arrived in Poland the competition had become as much a favorite topic of conversation as criticism of American foreign policy.

I have tried to get at the motive force behind this upsurge of competitive energy. In largest part the patriotism of the workers has been one motive but I think that there is something else that links itself to patriotism and the nationalization of the basic industries. Naturally increased wages have been a strong incentive to increase output. There is, too, the feeling that the country's whole standard of living will rise more rapidly if the production goals indicated in the three-year economic plan are reached even sooner. But to these I add the international crisis.

One outstanding Polish political figure who is not an official told me: "Your country's warmongers talk

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more than they can act." Yet he did not discount the fact that there is a sense of danger in Europe which in Poland has translated itself into a greater work effort. "We cannot," he said, "let the imperialists' rebuilding of Germany overtake us. We must not be left behind in the race of reconstruction."

I would not be telling the whole story if I reported that the labor competition has moved without a hitch. Again I refer to what my friend Zofia has called the "backward elements." They are there and they are not in too small numbers. Wladyslaw Gomulka, vice-premier and general secretary of the Polish Workers Party, openly rebuked those textile workers in Lodz who went on strike because they were being asked to tend more looms. There is no doubt that the workers are tired and paradoxically some of them have said that they slaved hard for the capitalists in the old days and now that they own the mills they can take it a little easier. Some workers even thought they would lose their jobs if they increased their efficiency—remembering that it worked that way under capitalist ownership. But these workers see now that the mills in Lodz, even with increased efficiency, need more weavers and spinners than ever before. There have also been plant managers who behaved as though nothing happened in the last few years. And there have been outright saboteurs with close connections in Mikolajczyk's underground.

These details represent the inevitable difficulties encountered in breaking from a slave mentality inbred over many years. But I did see the production ardor of several hundred Lodz textile workers when my wife and I went to a music hall in the heart of the city. The performances started at eleven on Sunday morning and stretched into the middle of the afternoon. The place was packed with workers who brought their whole families to hear the best professional talent in Lodz. Each act was introduced by a Polish version of Milton Berle, who dedicated it to one of the workers who exceeded the production norm the week before. As each worker's name was spoken applause swept the hall. I got the strong feeling that the labor competition in Lodz was passing out of the shallows and was moving into the main stream.

The Secret Mission of "El Segador"

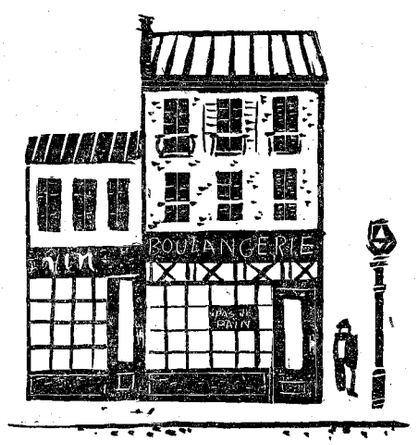
In Franco Spain the doomed men waited for death —but then he came. How the Loyalists fight on.

By RAE HOLT

Paris.

AT THAT time it was nearly mid-March, 1947, and the five of them set out on the mission. The orders were to go clandestinely to Spain, to a certain large and fairly distant town and liberate from jail eighteen Republicans who had been condemned to death. The names of all of these were on a list but the eighteen knew nothing of the attempt that was going to be made to save them.

The five were also Republican Spaniards. They might have been uninterruptedly in France since the end of the Spanish war and the exodus from Spain in 1939, or they might have been among the tens of thousands who fought for the Allies, or they might have been coming and going since the liberation of France between the two countries. Their leader had, several times, anyway, after his great part in



the Maquis and the freeing of the Southwest and of Paris. Coming and going. People do; some people, that is. Republican Spaniards — and also Franco Spaniards, and trained French, German, Polish, Croat and other fascist agents. What's a closed frontier to those on missions? On opposite, diametrically opposite missions. They are coming and going as you read this —the Republicans armed with faith and courage and patience; the Franco agents well-provided with money, arms, contracts, carrying on international fascism and Fifth Columnry in all their alarming, complicated and dangerous ramifications.

The five were *companeros*—determined, disciplined men. And brave. Their leader, "El Segador," is a man of small stature who began life as a reaper in the very heart of Spain. How well I know him; how well I love him. When he told me he had been a "segador"—a reaper of corn—I could imagine the way his arms must have moved, the sharp decisive stroke the scythe would have in his small, strong hands, the business-like way in which he would round off the corner of a field. He was beautiful in those days, in the early 1930's. He is beautiful now in a different way. I have a photograph the camera took of him as he must have been then.

I say "the camera took" and "must have been" because it is a double exposure—the *Segador* of today is standing behind the one of then, and I can-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not think how this has come about, having, it seems to me, taken only one picture of him at that moment. The *guerrillero* he is now is back of the young strike-leader of 1933. You would hardly know they are the same —the grim-faced man of prison and escape, of struggles and leadership, backing up the ardent, rather dreamy youth with the beautiful hair who was to go through the Spanish war as a captain and survive the horror of 1940-44 in France, including torture, and escape from a German camp, and leap from a window in Toulouse chasing Nazis and damage the muscles of his leg; and one day be lifting stones from river beds and doing masonry and the next be carrying liberation all carefully worked-out and at the risk of his life to those patriots in the Franco jail.

IT WAS still cold when the five set out and their clothes were none too good. The *Segador* had no overcoat. That was not to matter too long, because somewhere along the way they put on uniforms, down to the correct socks and shoes and caps and ties and buttons. On heart or hip they carried the hidden revolver. The mountain paths were known to them and where the Franco guards were likely to be around the frontier; their eyes and ears were on constant duty because now there are even more guards, and one of them watched always while the others slept. There wasn't much sleep anyway. They travelled at night, of course, and on foot and had to be quick about the mission so as to get to the jail in time.

I wonder what sort of thing they talked about on the way. . . . It wouldn't have been about the frightful risk of the expedition, the certainty of being tortured and shot if they were caught. Men like that don't talk about things they know down to the smallest detail. They talked, I know, about the increasing terror one saw among the *campesinos*—the peasants — more particularly among the peasants; they noted the increase of guards along the frontier and the fortifications that are still being made on the Spanish side, and constantly went on their way. It was mostly the peasants they talked to. They had to get food; they couldn't take enough with them for the many days' journey. *El Segador* knocked on cottage doors at night and often the inmates were so frightened they dared not open, because Falange and Guardia Civil police come like that to arrest and requisition. So the *Segador* knocked again. And when they answered he said quite simply: "We are the *guerrilleros*. Sell or give us some food."

How risky it sounds! But things are like that in Spain, just like that. A *guerrillero* has to be astute and utterly determined and at the same time take some terrible risks. It has to be that way. And when, from fear, the peasants hesitated, the *Segador* said, "Come on, food! We'll go away at once. And if they bother you, you must say we threatened to kill you if you denied us. As, by the way . . ." he would add, and look meaningly at them. But all the *campesinos* gave or sold, most of them gladly so, for they are with the *guerrilleros*, almost to a man. They know. They've known for years what Resistance and the *guerrilleros* are after: the liberation of Spain from fascism. Up and down the length of the wracked and tortured country *guerrilleros* have protected the country-folk from the brutalities of Falange and the Guardia Civil and the monstrous requisitions of state agents. Many peasants are *guerrilleros* themselves. So the five had always just enough food for the journey.

FINALLY they reached their goal. They went to the jail at night and banged on the door. It is a special jail and I cannot name it—one of the most formidable ones, a sort of fort. The five were now in uniform from top to toe. They had come, they said, to fetch for execution the eighteen men whose names were on their list. It was all quite regular, because, it seems, things are done that way. Yet there appears to have been some suspicion among the guards inside. So *El Segador* and his *companeros* knocked them out and proceeded into the innards of the fortress.

Here they found other guards and said, "Bring us these eighteen. We have come to fetch them for shooting," and showed them their list. But again there was a moment of demur. So the *Segador* said, "We are the *guerrilleros* come to free the prisoners. Bring them to us at once." The five took out their revolvers and covered the guards, but they did not have to shoot. The guards saw they were outnumbered and could not get help and so they complied and fetched the eighteen men.

It was all done very quickly and very neatly and the prisoners thought they were going to their execution as the *Segador* and his *companeros* grimly lined them up. The guards they locked into a cell and later threw the key into the river. And when one of the prisoners said, "You've come pretty soon for us. You're not supposed to come till tomorrow morning," they stuck their revolvers into his ribs and said gruffly, "Get on, get on, all of you." The condemned thought they had just eleven hours more to live—that was the margin between death and deliverance.

Soon they were all out in the street, and when one or two of the patriots looked around as if seeking a possibility of escape, the liberators said again, "Get on, get on," and still they thought they were going to execution. A little later, as soon as it seemed safer, the *Segador* told them: "We are the *guerrilleros* who have come to free you. You are not going to die." At that several began to exclaim, but the liberators still said, "Come on, come on—out to the country, away from the streets as quickly as possible. Then —then we can rest."

WHAT kind of men are these eighteen — what were they condemned for, what are they like? "All kinds," said the *Segador*, "young and old, sick and less sick. *How* they are depends on how long they've been in jail. Some had been in prison since the end of the Spanish war, since 1939. Tried three times and last of all condemned to death. Some of them were beaten right in the court itself, in front of the judge during the trial. *By order* of the judge: 'Go on, hit him harder; make him talk'—that's what he commanded the Guardia Civil to do. So as to get a 'confession,' the names of 'accomplices' and so on. Such a thing is unheard of—to hit in court itself during trial. In no other country—against all law, tradition, procedure." (Will lawyers, internationally, please note this fact?)

"Young and old," he said. "Some, *guerrilleros;* some, *campesinos*. The *campesinos* were tried and condemned to death on a charge of helping the *guerrilleros*. Not more than that! With food, or because they gave them shelter. Communists, some of the eighteen; others, not. Arrested for sabotage, for anti-franquist ideas, for being *Resistants* of different kinds. . . ."

These eighteen men had eleven

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Illustration by Bart.

hours between them and death—What did they say, what did they do when talk was possible?

"There were tears in the eyes of some all right. Then several said immediately that they want to return and liberate comrades when they've got a little of their health back. No, we can't allow that. *These* have suffered enough."

But how could they, some of them in an awful state, walk for many nights over the wild Pyrenean tracks, with hardly any food?

"It was slow, very slow. Some of them had to be given injections from time to time." Injections! What, on the mountainside? "We had a doctor with us." (One thinks of good planning—five *companeros*, the right number, no doubt, for this kind of job, and one of them a doctor—of course, of course.)

"It took thirteen nights to get back. Some could hardly walk. *Pero ya andaban*—walk they did!" said *El Segador* with one of his slow-quick, rather shy ironic smiles. "Rough paths and rocks, waters to go through, and the cold high up. At some places we had to pass near guards who were only about twenty yards away. You can't sleep much like that. I, for one, hardly slept at all the whole thirteen days, and somebody must be on watch all the time. There would have to be a pitched battle, of course, if the guards saw us. And then there was the gray-green river. I had to go through it four times, coming and going, so as to see where were the best places to cross. I don't know how some of them did get through, they were so weak, with the cold water up to one's shoulders here and there. It had to be crossed twice. And it's a bad thing to have only *fiambre* (cold, salt meat) to eat for thirteen days, very bad, very trying. At night we had to go to the peasants' houses: "We are the *guerrilleros;* we need food; some food please!" They always gave it to us, gladly did. Then finally we reached the frontier."

And where are these poor men now?

"In safety and some of them in the hospital."

And you, *Segador*, when did you get back?

"Last night, late. And this morning—by the first train to see you."

HE HAD the most terrible cold I have ever seen; his eyes were half closed by it. He was so tired he could hardly walk. Yet, vivid and trenchant, he could talk; he could tell me these things. And then he said suddenly, "When I was in the jail at *that* moment I thought of you. I said to myself, 'If she could see me in this garb, she would certainly take a photo of me.'" (My God—he thought of me in there, he had time for that. . . .)

We had lunch and then coffee and the fatigue went on and on. Many days would be necessary, I thought, for even the *Segador* to feel at all normally well again, and he such a specialist in fatigue.

Over the coffee he said: "Here I am sitting in a cafe in Toulouse all the time. . . ." Who, being *El Segador*, who wouldn't be? Of things past and present and to come. Of the vision of Spain, the look and the feel of it all, much worse this year than last, he says; of the peasants absolutely terrorized, particularly the peasants, it seems. Is something going to happen? Yes, "something" is going to happen all right, and "soon." But how soon, and what? It can't go on. And the army? "The soldiers, a great lot of them, most of them probably, would come over to us as soon as it begins. And officers too, more than is thought. And even generals, yes, even some generals."

So it will be violent again, it will be violent? Most probably yes, it will be. But short—maybe. Very violent perhaps. Blood to wipe out blood. What else will wipe out all the blood? Even so, blood does not erase death, so many deaths. What else will put an end to such enemies as these? There's hardly a family without a victim to fascism in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Spain. Tortures and crimes — these things have to be, and will be, paid for. *But there should be no personal vengeance or reprisals on either side.* The criminals will have to be arrested and handed over to Republican justice; that's all. Handed over to be dealt with by those professionally and legally competent and entitled to do this in accordance with the law. On that *El Segador* is absolutely intransigent, definite and precise.

Do men not go mad in prison?

"Certainly they do," says *El Segador*, "quite a few do. The ones they think the most 'dangerous' are in solitary confinement. Certainly men go mad in prison."

What can a man do all day in a cell alone? "Nothing, nothing at all. Even if there were something for him to do, he couldn't do it because he couldn't see to do it." That's all. Dark.

A little later he said: "There was this: at some time or other after the end of our war some prisoners were so ill and wretched, so physically ruined that all that was left them was *la ironia — sarcasm*. Half-mad, perhaps; half-dead, certainly. So when the Guardia Civil opened the door of the cell, being dressed in black capes because they had come for the execution, the prisoners said, 'Ah, here come the carrion-crows. Now we know we're dead. Here come the carrion-crows.' And the Guardia shoving and pushing them about, dragging them off to be shot."

As WE sat outside that little cafe in a leafy square in Toulouse on what seemed the first day of spring or heat (and so it was), the *Segador's* friend whom he had brought to see me and who had left us together an hour, came back and gave him a paper. It was an order-chit and it said: "Please report to us tomorrow. . . . There is something to be done which we think will interest you."

"Again," I said, "So *immediately* soon?"

"Quite possibly."

"Can it be the same kind of dangerous mission, more or less?"

"It can."

"Something to be done . . . in the other country?"

"Obviously so."

Thus—already, repeated, perpetual —comes the arrow. The intransigent, undeflectable, gladly accepted arrow that just says—*on*.

review and comment

CANNED ELEPHANT

Minnesota's gift to the Republican Party dishes out some stale pre-election thoughts.

By BENJAMIN J. DAVIS, JR.

FOR several years Harold E. Stassen, avowed candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, has been highly touted as a liberal. It is questionable as to how he ever got such a halo at all. Certainly in recent months it has all but disappeared under the revealing sunlight of life itself. Whatever was left of his so-called liberal philosophy is completely dissipated by his book *Where I Stand*.*

However, it is not because he does not try to keep up the illusion as long as possible. In his book one is impressed by the wisdom of a Socrates, by the purity of the plumed knight on a (lily-) white charger—all set forth in the ingenuous style of a simple, barefoot spokesman of the NAM.

Stassen's book was written as a weapon in the arsenal with which he hopes to bag the GOP nomination. Although there is no major difference between the reactionary principles held by him or Dewey, he belongs apparently to the "candor" school of GOP presidential aspirants and Dewey to the "coy" school. They're constantly needling each other on who speaks out on this or that, and who doesn't—an interesting and amusing sport which I don't think will be taken as decisive by the majority of labor and progressive Americans who want a Wallace-people's victory in 1948.

The book deals with labor and capital, with the Soviet Union and its system, Communists in America, the Taft-Hartley law, housing and health. One of his canned speeches on "small business" is thrown in for good measure. As he says, he omits "other major questions of Agriculture, Education, Discrimination, Human Rights, Atomic Energy Control, Strengthening the United Nations, Our Armed Power, Relations with Russia, Associations with Great Britain, Dependent Peoples, European Aid and World Economic Policy," because he has "spoken and written" on them before. That's a powerful lot to leave out—indeed, he might have done just as well if he had written the book on what he left out, and left out what he wrote the book on. Either way it adds up to just about the same thing — a slightly jazzed-up version of Wall Street's program.

In the chapter entitled "Bayonets vs. Pickets" Stassen begins disarmingly by telling how, when he was a fourteen-year-old boy, he practically wept at the way the big packers used the soldiers and injunctions to smash a strike of the AFL meat-cutters in St. Paul, Minn., in December, 1921. But he soon grows up and forgets all about his tears. He evidently regarded his boyhood sympathy with striking workers as the wild oats of his youth.

In the next chapter, "On the Other Foot," he castigates the New Deal for "its bullying of business and its sanctions and public smears against all who opposed it." According to the sober judgment of his manhood, the Wagner Act went to the other extreme by "setting new marks for one-sidedness." In other words, as early as the second chapter he has learned to hate Roosevelt, and even now is running against him, just as much as Truman is. But this homespun young hick out of the Midwest finally reaches

* WHERE I STAND, *by Harold E. Stassen. Doubleday.* $2.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

middle-aged maturity with his chapter on "The Fair Balance." Here he declares that the Taft-Hartley law is a "fair, just and well-balanced labor policy in America," that "it should not be repealed."

It is well known that Stassen spent a few minutes in the Soviet Union and was honored by an opportunity to talk to Stalin and other Soviet leaders. Naturally, this brief sojourn qualifies him as a so-called expert on Russia and he expatiates in this vein for two special chapters—and here and there throughout the book—revealing a deep profundity on the Soviet system which we Americans have never seen him display on the crisis-ridden mess euphemistically known as American capitalism. He admits that the Russians did much better for themselves by establishing the Soviet system instead of continuing the wretched czarist system. But that big-hearted concession is only for the purpose of insisting that now the Russians need Mr. Stassen himself, and above all Wall Street's "free enterprise" and "modern people's capitalism" if the Russians are going to get any farther.

In fact, Stassen, who is horrified by the thought that the American people should touch their own system or government, feels that anything this country can contribute to the overthrow of the Soviet government is our divine right and bounden duty. "America must in a friendly manner give the leadership" toward helping the Russians establish "a modern people's capitalism," no doubt in the image of Wall Street and the lynch system of the poll-tax South. Nice friendly fellow, this Stassen who sums up the key to good relations with Russia as "keeping our powder dry." His "liberal" way of carrying out that statesmanlike policy has since been to propose that America should sell no machinery to the Soviet Union, even though it might mean a few more jobs for American workers.

Stassen has two methods of dealing with us Communists in America. He points out that when he was governor of Minnesota, the Communists led delegations to his offices and all he did was to come out and speak to the crowd which became ashamed, after listening to his candor, and thoroughly embarrassed, and drifted away. Isn't it wonderful!

Simultaneously, Stassen advocates a twelve-point program of "combatting communism," eleven points of which are right out of the book of Goebbels, Rankin and Parnell Thomas. The twelfth point is the inimitable liberal touch of Stassen: "Take all these actions [to obliterate the Bill of Rights and the 'Reds'—B. D.] with complete respect for civil liberties and for legal rights." So goes the formula throughout this dull, cliche-ridden volume.

It is clear that Harold E. Stassen, the "liberal," stands where the majority of the presidential aspirants stand—with the refreshing exception of Henry Wallace. He is on the side of the big monopolies and trusts against labor and the people. *Where I Stand* is a flattering title for his book. It should be *Where I Kneel*, because the man is on bended knee serving the lords of dollar imperialism.

Blast

SELECTED POEMS OF BERTOLT BRECHT, *translated by H. R. Hays. Reynal & Hitchcock.* $3.50.

BERTOLT BRECHT's work is a trumpet blast at the walls of Jericho. In our time many poets have walled themselves away from real life and the reader, behind barriers of preciousness and obscurity; their affectations crumble to powder before the onslaught of Brecht's passionate straightforwardness. In our time, too, there have been walls built around the poet's audience —walls of ignorance and politicians' hypocrisy and newspaper lies. How many speeches of how many Senators fall into dust before:

WHEN THE LEADERS SPEAK OF PEACE

The common folk know
That war is coming.

When the leaders curse war
The mobilization order is already written out.

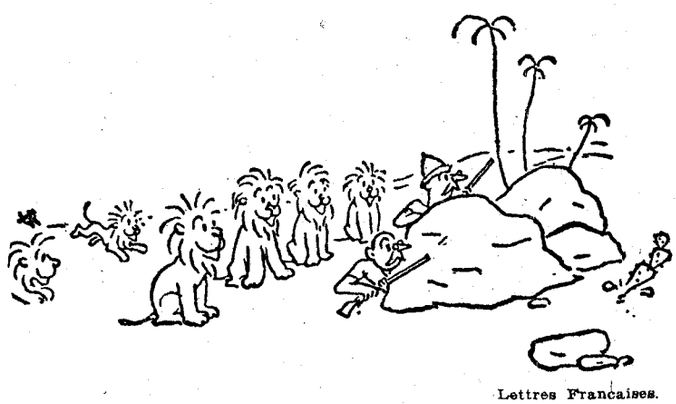
For Brecht is, unequivocally, a great poet; and an honest one and a brave one. The anti-fascist poems he wrote for Weimar Germany could not be translated at a more opportune time for America than the present moment; the songs of his exile during the bitter Hitler years ring warning bells for the future. He is no maker of jeweled confectionery strung on the slimmest thread of meaning or on no meaning at all. These poems are packed full of emotion and the realities of human life. The reviewer cannot pick a pretty phrase out of them to dangle temptingly before you; he can only say Go read.

Those who have sung Hanns Eisler's "In Praise of Learning" and "United Front Song" will recognize them here, and find with them other poems even profounder and more moving, like "A Worker Reads History," "Burial of an Agitator" and the heartbreaking "Children's Crusade 1939," which every mother in America would do well to memorize. There is little enough like Brecht in German, and almost nothing like him in English since the iron clang of the Anglo-Saxon bards. But something like him is very much needed, and one might predict that this volume will be a surgeon's knife to shear away the excrescences which disfigure so much American poetic style.

In short, Brecht proves that great poetry can stick to the point. As an example of his intensity and compression:

1939: LITTLE NEWS IS REPORTED FROM THE REICH

The house painter speaks of great times to come.
The woods still grow.
The fields still bear.



Lettres Francaises.

"I'm absolutely sure we're going to see some."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The cities still stand.
Men still breathe.

H. R. Hays' translation cannot, unfortunately, be praised in the same unreserved terms. His introduction is intelligent but nearly unreadable—he is one of those misguided souls who never use one syllable if they can think of ten—and his verse style, though simpler, is not simple enough. Brecht will bear literal translation, and there was no need for Mr. Hays to disfigure the stark beauty of the original with such substitutions as "by rainy weather battered" for Brecht's "eaten by the rain." With the later free-verse poems, where decoration is entirely sacrificed to intensity, Hays does well enough; the earlier work, however, combines a hothouse sensuousness, suggestive of Rimbaud, with gracious music and straightforward diction. And here Hays is at a loss. He falls into cliche; nor do his rhythms, when he has any, at all approach the original. Nevertheless the translations are reasonably accurate and quite clear, and sometimes very forceful. It is no disparagement of Hays' work to say that Brecht, like all great poets, is worth learning his native language to read.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

Chicago Jazzman

WE CALLED IT MUSIC, *by Eddie Condon. Narration by Thomas Sugrue. Holt.* $3.

EDDIE CONDON is unique among hot jazzmen in that he is never known to have performed a solo. His instrument is the guitar. His magic is the ability to make a band start jumping, to take on a new bite in its attack and new fire in its solos, from his beat in the rhythm section. He is an irrepressible crusader. As a youth in Chicago, he began to spread word of the great music being played there by the Negro bands up from New Orleans. He organized some of the first Chicago bands of white musicians. He pioneered in assembling musicians for record dates, thus giving posterity some imperishable jazz performances that would otherwise never have been heard, much less recorded. He pioneered in breaking Jim Crow restrictions against Negro and white musicians playing together; in producing a series of records deliberately aimed at preserving what was good in jazz, when the big record companies began to centralize, and dictate public tastes instead of following them. He pioneered the Town Hall concerts—a far cry from New Orleans street parades and dance halls, but a place at least where an audience could hear jazz at moderate prices and free from the chatter and snobbery of the night clubs where it had found an uneasy home.

Not only is Condon an outstanding performer of "Chicago style," but he helped create it. It is a limited style, lacking much that one prizes in jazz. If New Orleans music is the great social jazz, Chicago style is jazz for the phonograph record, jam session and connoisseur. But if Eddie never analyzed the roots of jazz and its reasons for coming into being, he loved it when he heard it, and saw realistically the only means through which he could preserve its sensitive interplay of melody, rhythm and timbre, its abhorrence of noise or cliches for their own sake. If his kind of music is lacking in the deepest poignancy and lustiest joy, in a sense of constant exploration of new emotions, it always preserves a chamber-music perfection and refinement of detail.

His reminiscences appear "with narration by Thomas Sugrue," but they have the flavor of Eddie's personality, his lively wit and proletarian feeling. Eddie might object to the word "proletarian," but it is the only one I can think of to describe the picture that emerges of his knockabout boyhood, when he and his brothers faced the world on their own.

By so preserving Eddie's personality, Sugrue has obviously done an excellent job. I don't care as much for Sugrue's own chapters on jazz itself, which have all the usual italics and misconceptions, including the common ones by which many who think they are friends of the Negro actually insult him. Take this, for instance: "He [the Negro] showed no desire to go away from what the European called the unconscious or subconscious mind. It was full of fascinating things —fairies, goblins. . . ." Or this: "It [the music] was primitive, unorganized, without melody or harmony."

Sugrue doesn't mean harm. He thinks that all contemporary composed music stems "straight from the unconscious," and probably thinks that modern composers are also without melody or harmony. But he needs some straightening out, and so here are some facts:

One, jazz has wonderful melody

an Englishman now living in California, has waited to publish his first novel until he had independent characters, something to say, and a story in which to set the characters in motion to say it.

As many novels do, *The Needle's Eye* concerns itself with the growth of a young man and his girl toward maturity, but in this case it is toward a real understanding of the world they live in, not just a realization that there are two sexes and that integrity and what is expected of one under capitalism are frequently incompatible.

Harold Wick, a sensitive private-school product, goes to live with his grandparents somewhere in the south of England. The grandfather is a logical Colonel-Blimp ex-India civil servant and the local squire. But the village also contains Joe Byrne, a brilliant and realistic theorist of the working-class movement, and his darkness on jazz, however, don't detract much from the value of the book. It is a pleasure to read and a mine of information. It is the kind of book that will some day be prized as part of an American legend, part of the epic story of the cultural growth of the American people.

SIDNEY FINKELSTEIN.

Discovery

THE NEEDLE'S EYE, *by Timothy Pember. Reynal & Hitchcock.* $3.50.

THE reading of entirely too many first novels often brings with it the same sort of embarrassment as peeking into an adolescent diary: the author finds everything that has happened to *him* so significant that he spells every last bit out to the public. So it is with considerable relief that the reader becomes aware that Timothy Pember, and harmony. It is not Wagner's melody, but there are many kinds of melody possible in music. Two, jazz, like all contemporary music, is as fully the product of the conscious mind as any other work of art, and a credit to the intelligence of the men who play it. Three, jazz is not primitive. It has some sounds that are also found in primitive music, but by the same reasoning we become primitive every time we put food in our mouth, make love or go on a dance floor. Jazz is twentieth-century music, and if it is baffling to some, it is not because they are culturally superior to it but because they haven't grown up to it.

These few chapters which throw

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

daughter Catherine, who believes wholeheartedly in her father and his work but who is still young enough to be strongly attracted by the smooth concerts and thick cream that her divorced mother can offer. Harold and Catherine are brought together by the vicar and his wife. The vicar is an honest man; his wife is warm and talented but, as Joe Byrne analyzes her, so concerned about each tree of injustice that she can't see the woods of the system that creates them.

As might be expected, this cast of characters reacts violently upon each other, with Joe Byrne the most stable influence throughout the other characters' swings and rebellions. At last Harold cannot take the gentlemanly nonsense expected of him, gets a factory job and sets about helping to unionize the plant, working as a member of Joe's organization. Catherine, too, thinks her way clear in a tubercular sanitarium and returns to marry him. The vicar makes some truthful remarks at a diocesan convention and is offered a London working-class parish to save the church the disgrace of having to fire him.

It is entirely too easy to point out the faults of Mr. Pember's book, but certainly the most glaring is ambiguity. For one thing, there is no particular year (in this century of any number of days that changed the world) in which the story occurs. It is sometime between the invention of the motor car and the coming of socialism in Great Britain, but no 1926 general strike, no fascism, no Spain, no war impinge on the characters. There is a similar reticence about what party Joe Byrne represents—indeed, for far too many pages he is merely a man unpopular with the Roast Beef of Old England boys, who has been in jail. He could even be a Moseley extremist or a member of the IRA.

The ambiguity extends, also, to the author's method of writing: each episode tends to begin with an undated, unlocated, uncharacterized piece of action that finally shakes itself down to sound writing that helps along character development or plot, rather like a quarterback who is poised for an ostensible pass that winds up as an end around. It's tough on the nerves, even if it does at last produce winning football.

But whatever may be said of Mr. Pember's book, it leaves the reader with the conviction that here is a grown-up man stubbornly wrestling with the problem of how to put on paper the historical facts that people in their own lives demonstrate.

SALLY ALFORD.

Velvele Federman

(*Continued from page* 14)

that Velvele remembered sweeping the skies above Pomyentze and he almost waited to hear the rat-tat-tat of the anti-aircraft guns and the terrible whistle of the dive-bombers. And with them came the memory of Griva and Makluzi and Ludojec and all the towns and villages that were no longer towns and villages and the memory of the shells whining across the sky and the terror and people running like animals and the torture and the ugliness and the time he had cursed His name.

ALL this Velvele saw as he stood at the Presence. All the way through it, Velvele said to himself, He must have sat looking on, and as if he were talking to himself Velvele said aloud, "All these years and You are still sitting there."

The Lord didn't answer. He sat as if He were sunk into Himself. The angels and the cherubim standing about the Lord glared down at Velvele as if their fiery eyes would burn him out. But Velvele wasn't looking at them. He was looking at the Lord, at the way He sat with His hand covering His eyes, as if the light of His own glory was too strong, at the way the horns of light dimmed the longer Velvele looked at them.

Looking on at the motionless figure, Velvele, in his anger, had forgotten it was the Lord. He remembered only what he had seen, empty spaces filled with rubble and with the dead. And his voice took on a harsh and contemptuous note. "Down below a hundred million human beings died. And You sit here."

The angel to the right side of the Lord flashed his sword before Velvele's eyes and shouted, "Respect for the Lord, ignoramus."

Velvele stared back at the angel and said sharply, "This is not a German court."

Gabriel said, "Proceed with your witness, Federman."

Velvele said, "It may be that You couldn't see from so high up. Otherwise how could You sit there and see it and do nothing? It may be You didn't see what happened in Pomyentze. Here is the total. I have kept it for You, I and the angel of death. There were fifty-four Jews in Pomyentze; then the Germans came and in a short time sixty-three were gone and I was the one left. Why, I asked You then, why me and not one of the others? Perhaps You can tell me why I was left—an ignoramus, a peddler, a horse? Why not one of the wealthy, or one of the learned—the Pomyentze Rabbi, for example, the Zaddik, whom they pushed into one of their freight cars? He stood there outside the freight car with the few others that were left around him, old women and children, and he stretched out his hands to You and he cried, "How long, O Lord? How long, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?' You didn't hear him — even the Pomyentze Rabbi was too far away for You to hear him." And Velvele repeated as he remembered them the words the Rabbi had spoken from Isaiah, while the congregation stood about him near the freight car,

> *"Until cities be waste without inhabitants*
> *And houses without man*
> *And the land become utterly waste*
> *And the Lord have removed far away*
> *And the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land."*

And Velvele's voice trembled, whether with sickness or anger or sorrow for the dead you couldn't tell, and then his voice cracked and he couldn't go on.

All around there was silence. Only around the witness-chair you could hear the cherubim chanting softly, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory." And beneath that sound was the other, from the multitudes of Pomyentze and Maidenek and Dachau.

The Lord moved His hand from his eyes as if He were ready to speak, and the cherubim stopped chanting and everywhere there was a great silence, among the hosts in heaven and among the peoples of the earth and among the dead awaiting the Resurrection. And the Lord's hand fell away from His eyes and He lifted His head and then Velvele looked up and saw that the Lord was blind and very ancient and that He was wrapped in a shroud.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Subscribe to the new* Daily Worker

DAILY WORKER, 50 E. 13th St., New York 3, N. Y.
Kindly enter my subscription to the Daily Worker for

☐ 3 months ☐ 6 months ☐ 1 year

Name .....

Address .....

City, P.O. Zone and State .....

Enclosed please find $..... to cover.

Rates (except Manhattan and the Bronx):
3 months — $3.00; 6 months — $5.75; 1 year — $10.00
(Manhattan and the Bronx)
3 months — $3.25; 6 months — $6.50; 1 year — $12.00

* NEWLY ENLARGED TO SIXTEEN PAGES
NEW FEATURES . . .
NEW COLUMNISTS

GREGORY PECK · DOROTHY McGUIRE · JOHN GARFIELD
Gentleman's Agreement
BRANDT'S **MAYFAIR** 7th Ave. & 47th St.
20th CENTURY-FOX

THE MAGIC MUSIC... THE TURBULENT TIMES...
THE LIFE AND LOVES OF...
The Great Glinka
The Father of Russian Music!
ARTKINO RELEASE
PRODUCED IN U.S.S.R.
STANLEY 7th Ave. bet. 42 & 41 STS.
DOORS OPEN 8:45 A.M.

★★★★ — NEWS
TORMENT
✓✓ — PM
and
IRVING PLACE THEATRE

LUISE RAINER, FERNAND GRAVAT, MILIZA KORJUS
THE **GREAT WALTZ**
IRVING PLACE and 15th STREET
GRamercy 5--6975

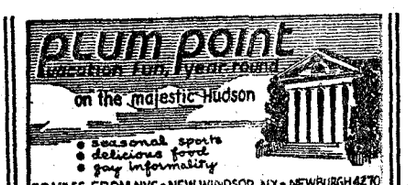
KATHARINE CORNELL GODFREY TEARLE
ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA
with Kent Smith
Lenore Ulric—Ralph Clanton
Martin Beck, W. 45, Evs. 8:15.
Mats. Wed. & Sat.

HOVANNES
School for Sculpture
Mornings, Afternoons, Evenings
126 East 59th Street, New York
PL 5-6123

Camp Beacon

Not even "Standing Room Only" left for Christmas Week
RESERVATIONS NOW ACCEPTED FOR
JANUARY
WEEK or WEEKEND
BEACON HAS EVERYTHING
N. Y. C. Information: SP 7-2223

The Fine Art of
COLOR MAKING
OILS CASEIN
Bocour Hand Grand Colors
579 Ave. of the Americas
Send for Literature


plum point
vacation fun, 5 year round
on the majestic Hudson
• seasonal sports
• delicious food
• gay informality
55 MILES FROM NYC • NEW WINDSOR, NY • NEWBURGH 4270

HOTEL ALLABEN
Jack Schwartz, Prop.
Make reservations for New Year's
501 Monmouth Ave., Lakewood, N. J.
LAkewood 6-0819, 6-1222

NEW MASSES

Classified Advertisements

50¢ a line. Payable in advance. Min. charge $1.50. Approx. 7 words to a line.
Deadline. Fri., 4 p.m.

INSURANCE

LEON BENOFF, serving a satisfied clientele since 1919, with every kind of insurance, including LIFE INSURANCE. 391 East 149th St., N. Y. Call ME 5-0984.

CARL BRODSKY—Any kind of insurance including Automobile, Fire, Life, Compensation, etc. 799 Broadway, N. Y. C. Tel. GR 5-3826.

EYE CARE

EUGENE STEIN, Optometrist—Eye examinations—Glasses Fitted—Visual Training. Room 507, 13 Astor Place (140 East 8th St.), N. Y. 3. GRamercy 7-0930.

ROOM TO RENT

WORKING WOMAN, beautiful room with bath in beautifully furnished modern apartment, Midtown. TR. 7-8224.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED